Cradley Community Growing Garden

What was the project, idea or activity?
Dennis Rose, a local resident from Cradley Heath who is visually impaired wanted to bring some community spirit to the area. He wanted to establish a community growing garden in an unused space at the rear of Cradley Library. The idea included providing a therapeutic space where residents could share skills, stories and knowledge through community growing. This would help reduce isolation, encourage social mixing and bring together a diverse range of people.

Dennis attended the Make It Happen Initiative in April 2017 where he met the Healthy Communities Team from Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. He spoke at length about his idea and shared his passion with the team. The healthy communities’ team encouraged him to apply for ‘Make It Happen’ funding. Dennis worked closely with the community development workers between April 2017 and September 2018 to turn his dream into reality.

What difference has it made?
This project is socially enabling for residents of Cradley Heath - they will learn new skills, grow in confidence, gain peer to peer support in an environment that is understanding and supportive where they can share empathy and laughter together. The garden is helping people who are isolated and lonely to get involved with a local resident led initiative. It offers opportunities for people from all different backgrounds to mix together within Cradley.

How did other people help to make this happen?
There were a range of connections made that helped kick start the project. Dennis started building a network of contacts, resources and community connections very early in the process. He empowered School Pupils at the neighbouring Primary School to help design and plan the garden layout. With the help of the Healthy Communities Team, Dennis identified similar projects across Dudley and quickly started building links with each one.

What were the magic ingredients that made it a success?
Collaboration
Co- Production
Empowering Engagement
Setting Achievable Goals
Patience